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**Introduced by Senators Runner, Ackerman, Aanestad, and Cox**

February 14, 2007

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An act relating to health care.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 236, as introduced, Runner. Health care: Cal CARE program.

Existing law, the Knox-Keene Health Care Service Plan Act of 1975, provides for the licensure and regulation of health care service plans by the Department of Managed Health Care. Existing law also provides for the regulation of health insurers by the Department of Insurance. Under existing law, an employer in this state is not required to provide health care coverage for its employees, and residents are not required to obtain and maintain such coverage for themselves.

This bill would express the Legislature's intent to enact the Cal CARE program to improve access to health care services for the residents of this state, as specified.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1 SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares the
- 2 following:
- 3 (1) Cal CARE is a program that will improve the current health
- 4 care system in this state and provide the most effective means of
- 5 making health care more affordable and accessible to the residents
- 6 of California.

1 (2) Cal CARE will create more consumer options and cultivate  
2 marketplace competition by eliminating regulatory hurdles in the  
3 health care system.

4 (3) Cal CARE will provide new incentives for hospitals and  
5 private industry to increase the number of primary care clinics,  
6 thereby improving accessibility to health care services in rural and  
7 medically underserved areas of this state. It will also provide less  
8 expensive alternatives to treatment provided by emergency rooms,  
9 which treatment contributes to increasing health care costs.

10 (4) Cal CARE will increase the number of Californians with  
11 health care coverage by offering incentives to employers who offer  
12 health care coverage to their employees, and it will prioritize  
13 funding for children's health care initiatives provided by First 5  
14 California pursuant to Division 108 of the Health and Safety Code.

15 (5) Cal CARE will require Californians to take personal  
16 responsibility for their health care, providing an individual the  
17 same tax benefits as an employer who provides health care  
18 coverage to its employees.

19 (6) Cal CARE will not require Californians to pay for health  
20 care provided to illegal immigrants and will bill the federal  
21 government for the costs California taxpayers already must pay  
22 for illegal immigrants' health care.

23 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature to enact the Cal CARE  
24 program to improve access to health care services for the residents  
25 of this state.